



Progress Update: NSSG Skills Delivery Plan

The Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG) reports on progress and activity arising from its Skills Delivery Plan.

The Nuclear Skills Delivery Plan is taking tangible action to ensure UK skill demand from the future nuclear civil and defence programme can be met through a highly skilled and diverse workforce. The Plan also underpins joint Government and Industry ambition for increased productivity, innovation and business growth as set out in the Industrial Strategy.

The actions to date have been focusing on building sector leadership on skills through:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Nuclear Sector a newly developed Strategy which sets out how the NSSG and partners will achieve their vision for a diverse and inclusive nuclear sector, including meeting the target of 40% of the nuclear workforce being female by 2030.
- An Updated Strategic Plan and creation of a robust evidence-base through a wide-ranging Nuclear Workforce Assessment (NWA).
- A new NSSG website has been launched to support and promote the activities of the NSSG.
- The first ever NSSG Skills Conference took place in March, a highly successful event that brought the themes of the Strategic Plan to life.

Other notable highlights include:

- 23 individuals transferring from EDF's Coal fired Cottam Power Station (which will close this year), over to its Nuclear Power operations, thanks to a bespoke ECITB Accelerated Experience and Learning Programme.
- Many of the Horizon employees whose roles were at risk, being retained within the sector, and EDF offering positions for all of the Horizon apprentices.
- NNL's Natalie White winning Apprentice Champion of the year, the top honours in the prestigious National competition.
- Launch of the North West Community Apprenticeship programme successfully creating a pipeline of skills for the supply chain in the North West, whilst at the same time providing a template programme which can be shared and applied in other parts of the UK.

Dr Fiona Rayment OBE, Director NIRO (National Nuclear Laboratory) and Chair of the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group said: *"The nuclear sector has seen a number of important achievements across a key foundation of productivity - People. Our skilled individuals who are joining, transferring into and who make up our sector are fundamentally vital to our continued success. The NSSG would also like to take the opportunity to recognise all those fantastic organisations who are playing a vital role in furthering this mission – from educators, trades unions and trade bodies, to professional institutes, regional and skills bodies."*

David Vineall, Group HR Director at Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, who leads the NSSG Diversity theme added: *"These sector achievements are all aimed at building on our successes to ensure the UK remains at the very forefront of the development and deployment of nuclear expertise. Our Plan also recognises that the sector must continue to drive a major culture shift through its actions on diversity. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy is now in place, and will take us on a journey towards the more balanced representation our sector urgently requires to deliver diversity of thought and in turn change and innovation."*



Sector Progress

The NSSG has introduced a Programme Delivery Structure, with leads for each of the five key People Themes set out in the Plan. This has seen it working with [supporting organisations](#) who are best placed to deliver the Strategic Objectives. The NSSG also embraces the nuclear supply chain through representation from the National Skills Academy for Nuclear (NSAN), and Ministry of Defence (MoD) strategic partners (AWE and Rolls Royce). The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) is also represented on the Group. The collective achievements are set out below:

1. Enhanced skills leadership

NSSG Strategic and Delivery Plans updated and [published](#) reflecting new member insights, as well as new intelligence, risks and evidence that have arisen since the 2016 Strategic Plan was initially published

Inaugural Nuclear Skills Conference: *Nuclear Skills 2019* took place in March, a successful event, organised by the NSSG and targeting the key Nuclear Sector Deal workforce themes, and attended by 250 sector representatives.

Nuclear Workforce Assessment (NWA) data is currently being analysed. This is the NSSG sponsored UK nuclear sector bi-annual forecast of skills supply and demand across the entire nuclear sector, to be published late summer.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Nuclear Sector the newly developed sector owned strategy sets out how the NSSG and partners will achieve their vision for a progressive, diverse and inclusive nuclear sector that inspires attracts and retains people from all communities and backgrounds.

An Equality Diversity and Inclusion Task Group has been established together with a set of principles and a framework for action. Women in Nuclear (WiN) has taken on the Chair of its gender diversity sub-group with a specific focus on the 40% women in nuclear by 2030 target set out in the NSD. An early deliverable is to create a 'road map' of the activities and deliverables planned by the sector to achieve this target.

2. Local Apprenticeships

North West Nuclear Community Apprenticeship Programme: this was launched in January and now has 10 apprentices working in a range of SMEs in West Cumbria. The scheme is currently recruiting more apprentices, and will expand to a target of 50 apprentices per year.

Development of further options for regional Group Apprenticeship Schemes is now underway, in the first instance to create a similar scheme in the South West. Such schemes involve identifying a range of companies to be host employers, who are then matched to apprentices as they are recruited. Training is delivered by leading providers in the area.

Survey launched to gather evidence on use of apprenticeships and levy in the nuclear sector; the [NSSG Apprenticeship Survey](#) an important exercise to gather an even deeper understanding of the uptake of apprenticeships in the nuclear industry and the findings will support the workforce planning.

3. Staying at the Cutting Edge

Functional Specification for a [Subject Matter Expert](#) (SME) published: this has been developed by the NSSG SME-High Level Skills Working Group as a key reference document for the industry on the guiding principles for an SME development programme. Subject Matter Experts are personnel with authority in a specific work area developed through in depth experience of the subject.



The NSSG is continuing work with the Institute for Apprenticeships on a newly developing Nuclear Technical Specialist Apprenticeship Standard at Level 8 (PhD level), a ground-breaking approach to doctoral level training, which will enable access to the opportunities to increasingly diverse populations.

The Alpha Skills Programme, which is being progressed by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), Sellafield, NNL and AWE, is ensuring scarce plutonium management skills are maintained; the safe and secure management of civil separated plutonium is a UK government priority and the NSSG is engaged with this important work.

A Technical Questionnaire has been developed and issued to explore the the skills required for future nuclear technologies, and innovative ways of working. Recognising that the innovation and cost reduction will not be achieved, unless we bring in new approaches.

EPSRC support for Centres for Doctoral Training continues with funding secured for two Centres in the UK, embracing 80 PhDs over the coming 5 years.

Nuclear Innovation Programme funding is continuing to fund specific nuclear programmes that will prime the High Level Skills talent pipeline and enable the creation and maintenance of SMEs in particular areas.

4. Sector Transferability

A Strategic Curriculum review of standards and qualification needs of the nuclear sector is underway. This will explore the requirements of our industry and the capability and capacity of our providers to meet these requirements. Where gaps are identified, the NSSG will determine the best way to address the skills needs accordingly.

Online standardised Career Pathways launched: this year NSSG launched a dedicated web platform for people interested in starting a career in the UK's nuclear sector www.nssguk.com/nuclear-career-pathways. The roles making up these career pathways are described, along with the competencies and qualifications required to undertake them. This allows the translation of roles from other sectors to help individuals and organisations to focus on transferable skills

A new bespoke ECITB Accelerated Experience and Learning Programme has seen 23 individuals on a transfer programme from EDF's Coal-fired Power Station at Cottam to Nuclear pre-operations roles for Hinkley Point C. The scheme recognised the high levels of technical competence as well as agility, innovation and commercial acumen of the transferees, and only trains for the gaps in their competence, thus making transfer more efficient.

21 Apprentices from Horizon were transferred to EDF to continue with their training, now working towards an EDF Degree Apprenticeship or a Level 3 Engineering and Maintenance Apprenticeship. At EDF they will gain valuable industry experience working on Hinkley Point C and, importantly, remain in the nuclear sector.

An NDA mobility strategy is currently under consultation with potential for sector wide application. This will explore the barriers and enablers to cross-sector mobility in order to more nationally maximise the benefit from the highly experienced and trained workforce, and providing more sustainable employment opportunities within the sector, as resource demands fluctuate

5. Exciting the Next Generation about Nuclear

The NSSG has developed and approved the business case for a Next Generation Nuclear project. This would see a project spanning a full programme of activities to boost nuclear schools and college outreach, covering a teaching resource portal, meaningful



workplace encounters and Teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This would be the first of a kind 'whole sector' approach to improving outreach and careers activity and would support the implementation of the Government's Careers Strategy

Next Steps in the People Programme

Project Management: the NSSG will continue to work closely with the Nuclear Industry Council (NIC), Department for Business, Environment and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and other key partners in implementing the Delivery Plan.

Nuclear Sector Branding: this is central to attracting a diverse nuclear skills pipeline, and this year the NSSG will join forces with the Nuclear Industry Association (NIA), which is leading on sector branding, to develop an attraction campaign.

Integrating diversity: finally, the NSSG will seek to integrate its ED&I Strategy across all the Plan People themes, with a focus on an inclusive culture, innovation and growth, agile working and social inclusion.

